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Notable Faculty: A Long Parade of Distinguished Teachers and Scholars from Years Past

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Notable faculty

A long parade of distinguished teachers and scholars from years past

Over a century and a quarter, a long parade of distinguished teachers have brought both wisdom and knowledge to their students at what is now SUNY Buffalo Law School. Many have riveting life stories – experiences that intersected with their teaching and scholarship in sometimes surprising ways. Here are a few of the notable faculty from years past.

Born to parents who had moved from Germany to Czechoslovakia in 1933, Professor **Thomas Buergenthal** grew up in the Jewish ghetto of Kielce (Poland) and later in the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen. (His memoir of that upbringing, *A Lucky Child*, has been translated into more than a dozen languages.) A specialist in international law and human rights law, Buergenthal served in the early 2000s as a judge on the International Court of Justice at The Hague. He currently teaches at George Washington University Law School.

Mark DeWolfe Howe served as the Law School's sixth dean, 1941 to 1945. After graduating from Harvard with a bachelor of laws degree, he clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes (he later wrote a two-volume biography of the justice), then practiced law in Boston. Earlier in his life he had taken a turn in Hollywood, serving as a second assistant director for Paramount Pictures, where he worked on movies starring Jimmy Durante and Fred Allen. He wrote extensively on questions of constitutional law, particularly on church-state relations.

Jacob D. Hyman, well-remembered by those he taught or mentored during his 54 years of association with the Law School, served as the school's 10th dean, from 1953 to 1964. Hyman practiced in his uncle's New York City law firm, then worked at the federal Department of Labor and the Office of Price Administration, before deciding to enter academia. His teaching and scholarship centered in the areas of administrative law, constitutional law, jurisprudence, and state and local government law. He was also active in civic organizations, served as a labor arbitrator and maintained an unceasing advocacy for equal opportunity at all levels of education.

Louis L. Jaffe, who joined the faculty in 1936 and served from 1948 to 1950 as the Law School's eighth dean, was a leading scholar of administrative law. He was a clerk to Justice Louis D. Brandeis of the U.S. Supreme Court. Jaffe's analysis of the role of courts in the review of administrative agencies, particularly the Federal Communications Commission, gained him national recognition. The U.S. Supreme Court frequently cited his arguments and positions on the scope and nature of judicial review of agency decisions. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Jaffe returned to the school in 1950 and taught there for 27 years.

Human rights had no greater friend than **Virginia Leary**, who taught at the Law School for 19 years and retired in 1995 as a Distinguished Service Professor. In a sense her life came full circle in Geneva, Switzerland, where she earned a doctoral degree from the Graduate Institute of International Studies, and where she retired. As a pioneer in teaching and scholarship in human rights law, Leary was long a leader in international law and served on the Executive Council of the American Society of International Law. In 2009, the Law School established the Virginia Leary Human Rights Fellowship in her honor.



Professor Thomas Buergenthal

Mark DeWolfe Howe

Francis M. Shea

Albion W. Tourgee

Louis L. Jaffe

Louis A. Del Cotto

David Riesman Jr., an attorney and sociologist who joined the faculty in 1937, gained fame with the publication of his co-authored book *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* in 1950. "The book generated academic debate, opposition and occasional derision," noted *The New York Times*. "Its champions considered it a brave and unusual effort to define the shifting relationship between the general culture and individual behavior." Riesman, who also wrote a dozen other books, also taught at the University of Chicago and at Harvard.

Francis M. Shea, fifth dean of the Law School (1936-39), came to Buffalo from Harvard Law School and immediately began to recruit his faculty friends from that august institution. Under his deanship, the law library was expanded by 6,300 volumes and the moot court program was expanded. Following his deanship, Shea joined the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt as assistant attorney general heading the Claims Division (now the Civil Division) in the Department of Justice. He personally argued over 50 cases before the Supreme Court and other federal courts.

Christopher G. Tiedeman was the third dean of the Law School (1902-03) and the first to hold down the post full time. Tiedeman was only 45 when he came to Buffalo. But he was no novice when it came to legal education, having taught already for 10 years at the Missouri Law School and for six at NYU. Tiedeman was a conservative legal scholar who was part of the group known as the "laissez-faire constitutionalists"; they defended a natural-rights "hands off" approach to interpreting the Constitution. Unfortunately, he died suddenly in 1903. But even at that early age he had published seven full-length treatises, two textbooks, more than 20 articles and a major centenary reconsideration of the Constitution.

Albion W. Tourgee, the first professor of legal ethics at the Law School, was a colorful character whose career included stints as a Union soldier in the Civil War, a lawyer, judge, novelist and diplomat. He represented the plaintiff in the infamous 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which upheld the doctrine of "separate but equal" in racial segregation. He was wounded at the First Battle of Bull Run and held as a prisoner of war in Richmond, Va., until 1863. As an activist Republican in North Carolina, he successfully advocated for equal political and civil rights for all citizens; ending property qualifications for jury duty and office holding; popular election of all state officers, including judges; free public education; abolition of whipping posts for those convicted of crimes; judicial reform; and uniform taxation.

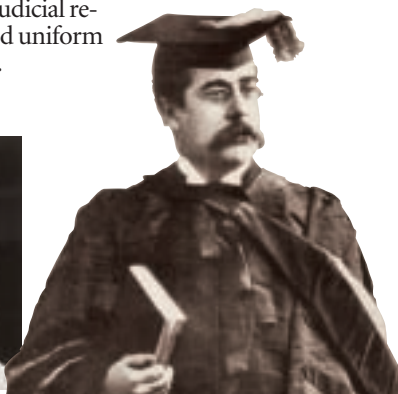
"The consummate teacher," one former student wrote of **Louis A. Del Cotto** '51, who over more than 40 years introduced generations of Law School students to the vagaries of tax law. Del Cotto and Professor Kenneth Joyce were the heart of the school's tax program for decades. He specialized in tax matters as a partner in the law firm of Jaeckle, Fleischmann, Kelly, Swart and Augspurger, and later joined the Buffalo law firm of Kavinoky and Cook as tax counsel. Considered a top tax authority in New York State, he was expert in the intricacies of the tax code, statutes and regulations. He also published many scholarly articles on tax matters. He was also an accomplished musician on the classical and jazz guitar, piano and mandolin. In 2011, the Louis A. Del Cotto Professorship was established, primarily by Brian Baird '83.



Virginia Leary



David Riesman Jr.



Christopher G. Tiedeman



Jacob D. Hyman